

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. 1. A computer-implemented method for estimating how a user would rate an item that the user has not yet rated, the method comprising the steps of:
 3. identifying one or more items that have been rated by the user;
 4. identifying one or more other users that have rated the one or more items and given ratings to the one or more items that are substantially similar to ratings given by the user to the one or more items; and
 5. estimating how the user would rate the item that the user has not yet rated based upon how the one or more other users rated the item.
1. 2. The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the step of identifying one or more items that have been rated by the user includes identifying one or more items that have been rated favorably by the user.
1. 3. The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 2, wherein the ratings given by the user to the one or more items satisfy a minimum rating threshold.
1. 4. The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the step of identifying one or more other users that have rated the one or more items and given ratings to the one or more items that are substantially similar to ratings given by the user to the one or more items includes identifying one or more other users that have rated the one or more items and given ratings to the one or more items that are within a specified amount of ratings given by the user to the one or more items.
1. 5. The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 4, wherein the step of

2 identifying one or more other users that have rated the one or more items and given
3 ratings to the one or more items that are within a specified amount of ratings given
4 by the user to the one or more items includes for each item from the one or more
5 items, determining whether the rating given by the one or more other users is within
6 a specified amount of the rating given by the user.

1 6. The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 4, wherein the step of
2 identifying one or more other users that have rated the one or more items and given
3 ratings to the one or more items that are within a specified amount of ratings given
4 by the user to the one or more items includes determining whether an average of the
5 ratings given by the one or more other users to the one or more items is within a
6 specified amount of an average of the ratings given by the user to the one or more
7 items.

1 7. The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the step of
2 estimating how the user would rate the item that the user has not yet rated based
3 upon how the one or more other users rated the item includes comparing the ratings
4 given by the one or more other users to the one or more items to ratings given by the
5 one or more other users to the item that the user has not yet rated.

1 8. The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 7, wherein the step of
2 comparing the ratings given by the one or more other users to the one or more items
3 to ratings given by the one or more other users to the item that the user has not yet
4 rated includes comparing an average of the ratings given by the one or more other
5 users to the one or more items to ratings given by the one or more other users to the
6 item that the user has not yet rated.

1 9. The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the item is a
2 movie and the one or more items are one or more movies.

1 10. The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the item is a
2 game and the one or more items are one or more games.

1 11. The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the item is a
2 rental item.

1 12. The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the number of
2 items in the one or more items is at least a specified number of items.

1 13. A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of one or more
2 instructions for estimating how a user would rate an item that the user has not yet
3 rated, the one or more sequences of one or more instructions including
4 instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or
5 more processors to perform the steps of:
6 identify one or more items that have been rated by the user;
7 identify one or more other users that have rated the one or more items and given
8 ratings to the one or more items that are substantially similar to ratings
9 given by the user to the one or more items; and
10 estimate how the user would rate the item that the user has not yet rated based
11 upon how the one or more other users rated the item.

1 14. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 13, wherein the step of
2 identifying one or more items that have been rated by the user includes
3 identifying one or more items that have been rated favorably by the user.

1 15. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 14, wherein the ratings given by

2 the user to the one or more items satisfy a minimum rating threshold.

1 16. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 13, wherein the step of
2 identifying one or more other users that have rated the one or more items and given
3 ratings to the one or more items that are substantially similar to ratings given by the
4 user to the one or more items includes identifying one or more other users that have
5 rated the one or more items and given ratings to the one or more items that are
6 within a specified amount of ratings given by the user to the one or more items.

1 17. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the step of
2 identifying one or more other users that have rated the one or more items and given
3 ratings to the one or more items that are within a specified amount of ratings given
4 by the user to the one or more items includes for each item from the one or more
5 items, determining whether the rating given by the one or more other users is within
6 a specified amount of the rating given by the user.

1 18. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the step of
2 identifying one or more other users that have rated the one or more items and given
3 ratings to the one or more items that are within a specified amount of ratings given
4 by the user to the one or more items includes determining whether an average of the
5 ratings given by the one or more other users to the one or more items is within a
6 specified amount of an average of the ratings given by the user to the one or more
7 items.

1 19. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 13, wherein the step of
2 estimating how the user would rate the item that the user has not yet rated based
3 upon how the one or more other users rated the item includes comparing the ratings

4 given by the one or more other users to the one or more items to ratings given by the
5 one or more other users to the item that the user has not yet rated.

1 20. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein the step of
2 comparing the ratings given by the one or more other users to the one or more items
3 to ratings given by the one or more other users to the item that the user has not yet
4 rated includes comparing an average of the ratings given by the one or more other
5 users to the one or more items to ratings given by the one or more other users to the
6 item that the user has not yet rated.

1 21. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 13, wherein the item is a movie
2 and the one or more items are one or more movies.

1 22. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 13, wherein the item is a game
2 and the one or more items are one or more games.

1 23. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 13, wherein the item is a
2 rental item.

1 24. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 13, wherein the number of
2 items in the one or more items is at least a specified number of items.

1 25. A computer-implemented method for selecting a particular movie to be
2 recommended to a user for rental, the method comprising the steps of:
3 identifying a first set of one or more movies that have been rated favorably by the
4 user;
5 identifying one or more other users that have rated the first set of one or more
6 movies favorably and given ratings to the first set of one or more movies

7 that are within a specified amount of ratings given by the user to the first
8 set of one or more movies;

9 identifying a second set of one or more movies that the one or more other users
10 have rated favorably compared to the first set of one or more movies,
11 wherein the second set of one or more movies have not been rated by the
12 user; and

13 selecting the particular movie from the second set of one or more movies.

1 26. A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of one or more
2 instructions for selecting a particular movie to be recommended to a user for
3 rental, the one or more sequences of one or more instructions including
4 instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or
5 more processors to perform the steps of:
6 identify a first set of one or more movies that have been rated favorably by the
7 user;
8 identify one or more other users that have rated the first set of one or more movies
9 favorably and given ratings to the first set of one or more movies that are
10 within a specified amount of ratings given by the user to the first set of
11 one or more movies;
12 identify a second set of one or more movies that the one or more other users have
13 rated favorably compared to the first set of one or more movies, wherein
14 the second set of one or more movies have not been rated by the user; and
15 select the particular movie from the second set of one or more movies.

1 27. An apparatus comprising:

2 a movie selection mechanism configured to select a particular movie to be
3 recommended to a user for rental by
4 identifying a first set of one or more movies that have been rated favorably
5 by the user,
6 identifying one or more other users that have rated the first set of one or
7 more movies favorably and given ratings to the first set of one or
8 more movies that are within a specified amount of ratings given by
9 the user to the first set of one or more movies,
10 identifying a second set of one or more movies that the one or more other
11 users have rated favorably compared to the first set of one or more
12 movies, wherein the second set of one or more movies have not
13 been rated by the user, and
14 selecting the particular movie from the second set of one or more movies;
15 and
16 a data generator communicatively coupled to the movie selection mechanism and
17 configured to generate data that indicates the particular movie selected
18 from the second set of one or more movies.

1 28. An apparatus comprising:
2 a memory configured to store data; and
3 an estimator mechanism communicatively coupled to the memory and configured
4 to estimate how a user would rate an item that the user has not yet rated by
5 identifying one or more items that have been rated by the user,

6 identifying one or more other users that have rated the one or more items
7 and given ratings to the one or more items that are substantially
8 similar to ratings given by the user to the one or more items, and
9 estimating how the user would rate the item that the user has not yet rated
10 based upon how the one or more other users rated the item.

- 1 29. The apparatus as recited in Claim 28, wherein the estimator mechanism is further
2 configured to identify one or more items that have been rated favorably by the
3 user.
- 1 30. The apparatus as recited in Claim 29, wherein the estimator mechanism is further
2 configured to determine whether the ratings given by the user to the one or more
3 items satisfy a minimum rating threshold.
- 1 31. The apparatus as recited in Claim 28, wherein the estimator mechanism is further
2 configured to determine whether the ratings given by the one or more other users to
3 the one or more items are within a specified amount of the ratings given by the user
4 to the one or more items.
- 1 32. The apparatus as recited in Claim 31, wherein the estimator mechanism is further
2 configured to determine, for each item from the one or more items, whether the
3 rating given by the one or more other users is within a specified amount of the rating
4 given by the user.
- 1 33. The apparatus as recited in Claim 31, wherein the estimator mechanism is further
2 configured to determine whether an average of the ratings given by the one or more
3 other users to the one or more items is within a specified amount of an average of the
4 ratings given by the user to the one or more items.

1 34. The apparatus as recited in Claim 28, wherein the estimator mechanism is further
2 configured to compare the ratings given by the one or more other users to the one or
3 more items to ratings given by the one or more other users to the item that the user
4 has not yet rated.

1 35. The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 34, wherein the estimator
2 mechanism is further configured to compare an average of the ratings given by the
3 one or more other users to the one or more items to ratings given by the one or more
4 other users to the item that the user has not yet rated.

1 36. The apparatus as recited in Claim 28, wherein the item is a movie and the one or
2 more items are one or more movies.

1 37. The apparatus as recited in Claim 28, wherein the item is a game and the one or
2 more items are one or more games.

1 38. The apparatus as recited in Claim 28, wherein the item is a rental item.

1 39. An approach for obtaining item rating data from users substantially as described
2 and illustrated herein.

1 40. An approach for managing inventory substantially as described and illustrated
2 herein.

1 41. An approach for renting content substantially as described and illustrated herein.